

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3-6, 8, 10 and 13 are amended. Claims 1 and 8 are amended to even further distinguish over the Ahmed reference (to be discussed below) identified by the Examiners during the interview. Support for the amendment to claims 1 and 8 can be found, for example, at paragraphs [0056] - [0060] and in Fig. 9 of the application as filed. Claims 3-6, 10 and 13 are amended to be consistent with amended claims 1 and 8 and to correct informalities in the claims. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representatives by Examiners Woldemariam and Ahmed at the interview held November 6, 2007 are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The Office Action: (i) rejects claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15-19 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Fan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,850,474) (Fan); (ii) rejects claims 2, 3, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fan in view of Li et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,058,222); and (iii) rejects claims 5, 7, 12, 14, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fan in view of Li (U.S. Patent No. 6,360,009). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon by the Examiners at the interview, Fan fails to disclose the combination of features recited in the independent claims as originally filed. The Examiners agreed to withdraw all the rejections based on Fan.

The Examiners indicated at the interview that Ahmed et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0037473) (Ahmed) might be used to reject at least some of the claims. Ahmed is listed in the attached Information Disclosure Statement. Applicants respectfully submit that Ahmed fails to disclose classifying a pixel of the image without adjusting the intensity of the pixel,

confirming the classification of the pixel based on the determined background intensity level of the image by comparing an intensity of the pixel with the determined background intensity, determining if reclassification is required, and reclassifying the pixel when reclassification is required, as recited in independent claim 1 and the claim 8 structure for performing these operations. Ahmed discloses comparing a pixel's intensity with a determined background intensity and then changing the pixel intensity with an intensity set to a predetermined intensity value, the intensity value disposed on the same side of the background intensity level as the pixel's intensity. See paragraphs [0015], [0063], [0064] and [0068] of Ahmed. Ahmed discloses adjusting the intensity of a pixel based on a background intensity, and therefore fails to disclose classifying the pixel without adjusting the intensity of the pixel. Further, Ahmed fails to disclose confirming classification with the background intensity or reclassifying of the pixels. Thus, Ahmed fails to disclose the combinations of features recited in independent claims 1 and 8.

Additionally, Ahmed fails to disclose classifying a pixel of an image, checking the classification of at least a portion of the pixels of the image based on the determined background intensity level of the image, reclassifying pixels based on the results of checking the classification, and processing image data of the pixels based on the classification of the pixels, recited in independent claim 15. Thus, Ahmed fails to disclose the combination of features recited in claim 15.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Information Disclosure Statement

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